

evil wizard distro

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A Howl
Against Marx

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RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING

Toward The Queerest Insurrection by The Mary Nardini Gang

Hostis 1 & 2

A Dagger of Feral Anarchy by Flower Bomb

Toward Goblin Mode by The Anarcho-Rizzler

Acrid Black Smoke by Anonymous

Toward The Creative Nothing by Renzo Novatore

On one level our project here couldn't be easier. We are describing a surface, smooth (if not flat), and we use the word "Marxist" to describe the surface. Then, we describe a vector orthogonal to that surface, and say *that* position is *ours*.

But in fact we have a more complicated project. For many people, ourselves included, Marxism has been the radical *Other* to American hegemony. We may be decades from seeing the world this simply, but we understand that in the polarized and barren landscape of American political analysis this position holds a great deal of resonance for many people. Cold War thinking still dominates our political imagination even if radicals are currently grappling with the implications of French philosophy from the 60s and 70s.

Moreover, for the radical left (and their discontents) Marxism has been the "science" to back up the strategy of mass political action, party politics, and engagement with certain economic sectors above and beyond others (in contradistinction to the passion of the anarchists). Even if the science has been shown to be more and more threadbare and the strategy has lagged far behind, it continues to motivate both bright young minds and stalwart defenders of the flame. To the extent that Marxism is a major component both in the development and thinking of modern economics it has also been one of the few ways one can engage in theory in a serious, lifelong, and practical way.

Finally there are the teleological aspects of Marxism that are easy to reject, starting with the crass generalization of a historical analysis that begins in the Garden and ends in the true communism of the spirit. We would go beyond this. We would question goal orientation entirely because we do not see the logic of the Great Human Project beyond the local, or the individual. The Project has been the source of great suffering. Mostly the suffering of forcing young people off to war or work or whatever.

Our hatred for the system does not accompany a capacity to do much about it. We would not even recommend building this capacity. This building of capacity is one of the surest ways to be noticed by the agencies of authority. It is a sure way to be suppressed. Therefore we are left with little but our howl. And a howl is not a political program.

Our hatred for the left is for a thousand reasons but chief among them is the deception about power. The left, especially as it regurgitated Marxism, led us to believe that we did have the power to instigate change. To the extent that they have been successful it has not been along any other line than to benefit their own capacity to rule. We howl at them to drown out their lies.

Knowing too much about the world, about its organization and its deceptions, doesn't give us a responsibility to change it. It is too large, too rational, too far removed for any group, much less an individual, to move it even an inch. If we were to dream in political terms it would only be to dream of confounding rationality and progress. It would be to howl at the utopians who work within the system. To howl at those who negotiate with the social sciences because they truly believe. To howl at the remnants of the 19th century that haven't been cleared from our palate.

A HOWL

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We don't treat Marx as a comrade who went astray and led others down a wrong path. We are not attempting to reconcile our perspective with that of the Marxists. Marxism is an obstacle that has prevented clear thinking about a variety of topics because it has been assumed to have done the good work. This assumption is not true. It isn't not-true because there's no such thing as capitalism or people-who-are-beingfucked-over-by-it. Obviously there is and they are, these things exist, these categories are real. They just don't mean the things that Marxists want you to believe that they mean. There is no future history where we look back at a proletariat that came into itself and threw off the shackles that bound it. Revolution, as existentially complete of a concept as a secular person could ever contemplate, is only real in the mind. It is a satisfying illusion and little more. This does not mean that political changes don't happen, they do, but they are not as categorical as revolutionaries would desire. Political changes are not from tyranny to freedom, capitalism to socialism, or bad to good. Mostly, political change is a media fabrication used to disguise one form of palace coup or another.

NOT A CRITIQUE

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We are all philosophers. We have an unquenchable curiosity about the world and our relationship to it. This curiosity isn't objective, and surely not rational. It is a painful thing, a burden, and one of the few things I share with the bureaucrats and tyrants who freely roam the earth. I choose the word "philosophy" to describe this insatiability as a autodidactic declaration that specialists hold no sacred ground here.

Perhaps our approach should be described in another way. The things (whether they be buildings or ideologies) that humans have built have no (intrinsic) value. What (extrinsic) value they have, generally, is due to the violence that frames and fills them. Value is the ability to hurt, punish, and ultimately preserve what exists. It is a conservative impulse. The mechanism by which value is inscribed is beyond (individual) human capacity, it is only possible through the great ennui. Value is a hostile act against us little ones. I howl against it.

The form of this howl is central here. Some may believe that the only howl worth considering is to lash out, alone, against the order of value, gaze, and measurement. An inverted belief

is to internalize this order and run away from all rationality as the only way to hold onto the self in the face of impartial de-individuation. The tension of a howl is that it is primal, a feeling as much as a thought; social, intended to collect friends; exultant, a response of health & joy, not fear and sickness. A howl is not a critique, a negation, or sublimation, but a joyful lament about the entire situation. A howl usually looks like a curse or an attempt to abandon a train of thought. I howl alone not because I am alone but because I exult in the joy of... those who are coming.

The formal task of this howl is to dissect Marx into the categories where he is treated as central even if he isn't named as such. The categories we are most concerned about are Marx as Sociologist, Economist, and Political Philosopher. We howl against each category in turn to confirm what the reader may already suspect, which is that we intend to abandon all.

beyond enveloping its critics. Theories of social change mostly satisfy people who are interested in theory, future managers, and scholars. It may not have been possible to understand this in the middle of the 19th century but time has passed and it seems pretty clear now. You can't start a social movement with a Theory of Everything. Moreover a social movement may not be the lever we once thought it was. It may have the capacity to move the world (meant as abstractly as it sounds), but there is no fulcrum. There is no terrain in which a social movement could gain purchase. The (social, material) world cannot currently be rationalized. If it ever is, it will be the greatest horror show ever, and the social sciences, Marxism chief among them, will be to blame.

existential crisis and collapse. The relationship between history (what has been done) and political practice (what should we do) has been developed as a series of rails. We are on a train moving slowly from then to now. This assemblage of causal arrangements, and of a progressive story of history from primitive communism to bourgeois capitalism, is called dialectical materialism.

Those who see this world clearly, who have class consciousness, understand that the world is composed of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, of landlords and the lumpenproletariat. Moreover this understanding is a precondition to revolution and to the self-knowledge of the proletariat.

This mystical construction that requires an oblique knowledge prior to true living is also part of a spiritual practice. We who are the objects of the system comprised of exchange relationships are in a condition of alienation. To become subjects we must first recognize our alienation. Second we must associate and coordinate with others who share our form of alienation. Finally—through the process of de-subjectification—we will abolish the world of social classes and end alienation.

Perhaps a theory of everything was never the right idea in the first place. A critique of this world has accomplished little

SOCIOLOGY

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Society is a ghastly will-o'-the-wisp set loose upon the world, consuming individual capacity and desire into measured parts. Society may seem self-evident today but this is only because making it seem self-evident benefitted taxmen and Kings. We are forced into the frame of reference of *society*, which means problem-solving has become impossible, a capacity the State maintains as entirely its own. Therefore sociology, as the study of society, is a mechanism by which big problems are examined and approached by states and the people who love them.

It may be possible to examine the institutions and development of society in such a way that this examination would not be used to improve them but would probably have to be done so abstractly (or counter-culturally) as to be nearly impossible to access (for systems of control). Intellectual pursuits are not the same things as exercises in imagination or open-mindedness. They exist within a context that cannot be extracted from the pursuit itself. The phenomenon known as society did not exist 200 years ago. It exists today as the child

of revolutionaries and social engineers, and it cannot exist outside of the Academy or the institutions it services.

Marxist sociology is an understanding of society as a series of classes pressing against each other, like geological plates, in tension and relationship. These tensions exist. It's totally fair to say that society is comprised of tension. What's missing is the understanding that the creation of a phenomenon called *society* necessitates tension. The technologies that enable the nation-form include a social body in relative peace (along with communication and transportation infrastructure). This means framing our conflicts with one another in terms that are manageable. This framing is called sociology (or journalism or entertainment) and the Marxist variety is merely a type rather than something entirely different.

At worst this sociological perspective rationalizes all of our behavior. It turns insurrection into a series of object lessons about the excesses of economic expansion and urban planning. It describes, in excruciating detail, what human behavior is, confusing the basic point that economic behavior isn't the same thing as human behavior. It believes in a truth that it also has a hand in constructing.

At best this perspective draws us into conflicts that may or may not be real. Naming something that did not exist before as a single concept is a form of creating. Conflict theory (as

POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

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How does one develop a theory of everything? Especially if everything is really an inversion of the unquestioned reality of the now. Clearly one has to have an understanding of how we got here and how we're going to get there. One has to understand the construction of this world, that is, what are the building blocks. Finally one has to build in a spiritual arc: a place of losses and one of findings and a way to get from one to the other.

It's trite, at least in critical left communist circles, to comment on—by way of ignoring—Marx's Lutheran pedigree. What does it mean really? How are we implicated by the religion of our fathers? The structure of Hegel's secular Lutheranism in Marx's inversion places a great deal of value on the connection between what we do and what we see in the world. For Hegel, as a Lutheran, it is by faith, or good ideas, that we are saved. For Marx it is by labor, by work.

This framing continues to plague us. There is no radical who has not been confronted with the question *what do you do?* as a form of tracking liturgical practice backwards to either a materialist or idealist pedigree and then forwards to its

engineers and those who wish they were social engineers. When economists determine X, Y, or Z about how people should live, and politicians use that determination to set policy, it is politics. This *realpolitik*, is rarely done by generals, it's done by gray men doing serious science, on behalf of real people, for little to no reward.

We didn't get to this place, this enlightened and coldly savage place, by leaps and bounds. We got here one calculation, one abstraction, one measure at a time. A social engineer is not a job title, it is the gray man pushing us forward one step at a time.

We leave much more unsaid than said because our interest is not in the critique of the labor theory of value or the macroeconomics of the Soviet Union. We howl against it all but we also want to be precise. We abhor the measure of life in price and resource allocation. Exchange relationships are an occupying army.

with crisis theory), which defines society as the conflict between classes, created this conflict but it wasn't nearly enough to expose the existential conflict between individuals, aggregates, and society. The propertied class existed prior to its description by Marx. Clearly those who work also existed but not as a class and the magic of naming them was not, nor could it ever be, enough to make them a class. This gap—the distance that could be the space of class conflict—is under theorized because its proponents see and *believe* more than they test and reality check.

For those of us who desire some kind of transformation of the world-as-it-is, the centrality of conflict in Marxist sociological theory seems hopeful. Unfortunately, one of Marxism's most notable innovations was the process of *rationalizing* conflict, which Marx(ists) postulate is in the service of a progressive history. All *irrational* conflict is to be subordinated to the final telos. The great strength of Marxism is that conflict in society continues, and essentializing that fact is clarifying in a field that specializes in obfuscation.

ECONOMICS

ECONOMICS

ECONOMICS

The issue with Marxist economics is not that it's wrong. We understand that its motivation was always political rather than factual. Marx required an active agent for social change so that revolution could be possible. So he created one. Our issue is more basic. We reject the condition that has inculcated economics into the human sphere at all. We despise *Homo economicus* and the philosophers who return to its dialectical condition.

Let's take this a little further (with a caveat). We are not interested in distinctions between good science and bad prescience. There is no good science. There is not a pure thing called science that we anxiously hope for ATR that will solve all the problems of nuclear war and capitalism, that will allow the untrammelled imagination of angelic men to inflict itself onto a world of raw materiel. That said, it is possible to think about the universe in such a way that is beyond the production of new technologies. Imagination is possible and it is worthwhile to discover and explore a world beyond our eyes' capacity to see. A rigorous imagination could allow us to travel further, to ask *why*.

On the one hand there are the natural sciences and they are all well and interesting. It is probable that research in natural science, except for minor exceptions (so small as to be unnoticeable by the monsters of commerce), only benefits those who write the paychecks. On the other are the social sciences which are not so different on this line. There isn't a *People's economics*, there is only economics. A form of alchemy, sure, but to say that civilization is built on subterfuge, illusion, and half-assery isn't to assert anything at all. It is obvious.

The issue with Marxist economics is that it is an intellectual pastime, a model of the world-in-the-world. A model that believes that it is a dead serious rapprochement with a system that is entirely hostile to it. But not hostile on the level of politics (ie reality) but of seriousness. This system is involved in the serious business of feeding and protecting seven billion people. Utopian thinking with different goal scenarios might be worth a moment of discussion but are ultimately frivolities in this important, dangerous, exceptional time.

We're being coy, of course: both conflating Marxist economics with economics as a whole, and also dissecting the specifically Marxist economic field for being irrelevant because it is small, and they have not won. The victory, or lack of victory, of a particular ideology is not at all our interest. Our interest is in the impact on daily life by social